

Appln No. 09/637,764

Amdt date December 9, 2003

Reply to Office action of June 26, 2003

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In response to the Office Action mailed on June 26, 2003, please amend claims 1, 4, 7-9, 12, 16-20, 23, 24, 27-29, 31, 32, 33, 35-37, and 39-41 for clarity. Claims 1-4, 7-29, 31-33, 35-37 and 39-41 as now pending in this application. Reconsideration on the basis of the above amendments and remarks below is kindly requested.

The undersigned attorney wishes to thank the Examiner for the telephonic conference on August 4, 2003.

The Examiner has requested that all amendments made to the claims throughout the prosecution of this application be refiled in a single combined document. As such, the amendments made to the claims herein are a combination of all the amendments made to the claims throughout the prosecution of this application.

The Examiner requested that as per Rule 1.173(c) all claim changes should have an indication of where they find support in the specification. As such, applicants wish to advise the Examiner as follows. The changes to claim 1 find support on column 6, lines 10-14. Claims 28-33, 35, 37 and 39-41 find support on column 6, lines 10-19. Claims 4, 7, 8, 9, 12, 16-20, 23, 24 and 27 have been amended for clarity and for grammatical reasons.

The Examiner made objections to claims 40 and 41. Claims 40 and 41 have been amended to overcome these objections.

The Examiner objected to the Declarations. A set of revised Declarations is enclosed herein to overcome this objection.

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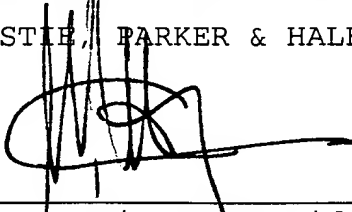
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The Examiner rejected claims 29 and 33 under 35 USC §112, second paragraph. Claims 29 and 33 have been amended to overcome this rejection.

On paragraph 8 of the Office Action, the Examiner stated that "According to the specification, particle sizes are described in terms of micrometers not in mesh sizes." The Examiner is invited to look at column 5, lines 26-47 where it is stated that carbide particles are often measured in a range of mesh sizes.

The rejections and objections to all claims pending in this application are believed to have been overcome and this application is now believed to be in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any remaining questions or concerns about the allowability of this application, the Examiner is kindly requested to call the undersigned attorney to discuss them.

Respectfully submitted,
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